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APPENDIX No. III.

REPORT

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

At the Annual Meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society, held on the 15th of March 1828, Sir Alexander Johnston, Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence, having verbally reported the proceedings of that Committee since its institution,

It was Resolved,

“ That he be requested to reduce his Report to writing, and that it be printed
“ in the Appendix to the Society’s Transactions.”

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE.

THE Committee of Correspondence understand it to be their duty,

1st. To open and keep up a correspondence and communication with every Government, Society, and individual, who can in any way assist the literary and scientific objects of the Royal Asiatic Society.

2d. To inspire all such Governments, Societies, and individuals, with an interest in the success of the Royal Asiatic Society, and a zeal in promoting their researches in every part of the world.

3d. To procure for the Royal Asiatic Society, and for such persons as may apply to the Committee, information relative to Asia, from every source and every country from which it can be derived; from every work, ancient and modern, in whatever language it may be written; from every servant of the Crown and of the East-India Company, whether civil, military, naval, or medical; from every diplomatic Agent and public Consul; from every Christian Missionary, whether Catholic or Protestant; from every traveller, trader, or navigator, whether Christian, Mahomedan, Hindoo, or Buddhist; and from every country in Europe, particularly from Portugal, Spain, Holland, Denmark, Italy, France, Germany, and Russia.

With this view of its duty, the Committee will now proceed to report to the Society what it has done within the last twelve months, in Great Britain, in India, and on the continent of Europe.

IN GREAT BRITAIN.

The Committee have to report under this head, that they have opened and kept up a correspondence with the East-India Company, the Universities of Oxford and Cam-

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bridge, the Royal Institution, the Medico-Botanical Society, and the Mechanics' Institute.

The East-India Company.

As the East-India Company possess so extensive an empire in Asia, and so valuable a collection of Oriental works in this country, the Committee have felt it to be their duty to communicate with the Directors of that powerful body upon every occasion upon which their co-operation was material, and are happy to lay before the Members of the Society a detail of the circumstances which are connected with one of the communications, and the important result to which it has led. Sir Alexander Johnston having long considered it of importance to a general knowledge of Oriental literature in Europe, that English translations should be made of all such Oriental works as are believed to contain new or useful information, in any branch of science or literature, had frequent communications upon the subject with Professor Lee, whose talents, and knowledge of Oriental languages, have so justly placed him in the highest rank of Oriental scholars in Europe; and Sir Alexander, some months ago, received a letter from the Professor, of which the annexed is a copy (see Note 1).

Upon the receipt of this letter, Sir Alexander spoke to Mr. Lindsay, the Chairman of the Court of Directors, and ascertained from him, that he agreed perfectly with Mr. Lee as to the utility of the plan which he proposed; and that he would willingly, if the plan were sent to him officially, lay it before the Court.

Sir Alexander Johnston then submitted the measure to the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, which, upon the motion of Sir Alexander, sent a deputation of its Members, consisting of Sir Alexander Johnston, Dr. Babington, Sir R. Barclay, Colonel Doyle, and A. Macklew, Esq., to the Chairman of the Court of Directors, with a request that he would officially bring the subject before the Court. He accordingly did so, and the Court having approved of Professor Lee's proposal, in a very liberal manner voted an immediate donation of £105, and an annual subscription of £105 more, in furtherance of the object of the Royal Asiatic Society. (See Notes 2 and 3.) Sir Alexander knowing that the plan of making English translations of Oriental works was very popular with many persons, who in other respects felt little or no interest in questions relating to India, thought it advisable to take advantage of this feeling, and consulted upon the occasion with Colonel Fitzclarence, who throughout the proceedings had taken a most active and efficient part in favour of the measure.

The Colonel immediately spoke to His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, who, being satisfied of the policy of the plan, not only subscribed his own name to it, but with a zeal which had always marked his patronage of the Society, adopted immediate steps for ensuring the success of the measure. Sir Alexander also knowing the weight which the public would justly attach to the patronage of the head of the church to such a plan, obtained through Dr. D'Oyley, the patronage and subscription of the Archbishop of Canterbury to it; and a Committee has now been formed for carrying it into effect, which is composed of several Members of the Society, and some of the

most distinguished Oriental Scholars in England, under the direct patronage of His Majesty and the Royal Family; of the First Lord of the Treasury; of the heads of the Church, Navy, and Army, and of many of the most powerful and distinguished individuals in Great Britain.

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The high character which the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge hold in the estimation of the Government and of the people of England, the talents and erudition of their Members, the influence which they naturally exercise over the education, and the religious and moral opinions and feelings of the leading men in the country, the collections which they possess of Oriental works, the attention which they pay to Oriental literature, the efficient aid which they can afford, by means of their printing presses, to the printing of Oriental manuscripts, and of the English translations of them, must render their co-operation of the utmost importance to any Society in England that is engaged in researches into Oriental literature and science, many parts of which are often of so much use, in illustrating and explaining subjects which are intimately connected with the true reading and perfect understanding of the most remarkable passages in the Holy Scriptures. The Committee, therefore, took the earliest opportunity of opening a communication with both these learned bodies. With respect to Oxford, they have to report that Mr. Peel, as soon as he was informed by Sir Alexander Johnston of the objects of the Society, and the wishes of the Committee, not only promised his own support to their proceedings, but, with the liberal feeling and spirit which he evinces on every occasion in which the interests of literature and science are concerned, immediately wrote upon the subject to the Bishop of Oxford, on whose suggestion such a communication as the Committee had wished was soon after opened between the Delegates of the Clarendon press and the Royal Asiatic Society. With respect to Cambridge the Committee have to report, that through Professor Lee, a similar communication has been opened between some of the leading Members of that University and the Society, and that the result of these communications is that the two Universities approve of the proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society, and that there is reason to believe they will afford the Society such assistance as their respective institutions will permit.

The Royal Institution.

The variety of the combinations of different metals which are used for domestic and other purposes by the natives of India; the variety of the materials which they manufacture, and of the substances of which their dyes are composed; the simplicity of the processes to which they have recourse in their several manufactures, render researches concerning them an object of interest to the public, and make it necessary that the Society should have the means of communicating with an institution, whose members and establishment are peculiarly fitted for obtaining and circulating useful information, relative to such researches. The Royal Institution, from the manner in which it is constituted, from the lectures which are delivered at its regular

meetings, from the knowledge of chemistry, theoretical as well as practical, possessed by many of its members, from the facilities which it affords for experiments and inquiries into every branch of science, from its valuable and extensive library, from the evening meetings which are held at its house every Friday, from the scientific character of the Society which attends these meetings, from the practical utility of the lectures which are delivered at them, and from the encouragement which is afforded to scientific men by Mr. Fuller, one of its most active and zealous supporters,* is evidently an institution which is well calculated for assisting the Royal Asiatic Society in researches of the nature which have been mentioned; and the Committee are happy to be able to report, that a communication has been opened between that Institution and the Society, which has been attended with great benefit to the Society owing to the zeal of Mr. Faraday, who is one of the most scientific chemists of the present time, and has frequently afforded the Committee the assistance of his talents, and profound knowledge of chemistry, in analysing and explaining to them the nature of the different combinations of metals and other substances which the Society have received from various persons in Asia, and which now form a part of the collection in their Museum.

The Medico-Botanical Society.

The immense extent and variety of the soil and climate of the British territories in India; the numbers and the varieties of the plants and other vegetable productions which are used either for food or medicine by the natives of the country; the facility which exists at present for the scientific investigation of their nature, their growth, and their medical properties, by means of the able and well-educated medical men who are stationed in every province; the interest which has been excited upon the subject by the works of Drs. Fleming, Roxburgh, and Ainslie; and the importance of such information to the British Government, with a view to the economy of their medical department and to the increase of the exports from their East-India colonies, have led the Committee to take measures for making collections of all the plants and vegetable productions which are used in every part of India, either as food or as medicine, for procuring accurate accounts of them from persons on the spot, for obtaining copies of every work written upon the subject in any European or Oriental language, and for opening a direct communication with the Medico-Botanical Society in England, through their President Sir James McGregor, who, from the high professional character which he enjoys, and the public office which he holds under the crown, has great influence both public and private, not only with all the members of his own Society and the medical men and botanists in Europe,

* This gentleman has lately had a certain number of gold and copper medals struck, at his own expense, with the head of Lord Bacon on one side, and the name of the person to whom the medal is given on the other, for distribution amongst such of the members of that Society as are the most distinguished for science. These medals, which are executed by Mr. Wyon, are specimens of the great perfection to which that distinguished individual has arrived in his art.

but with every King's surgeon and assistant surgeon in Asia, who from the scientific nature of their education, and the admirable regulations which Sir James has made for their guidance, form a most efficient body for collecting upon the spot every information which the Roval Asiatic Society can require in this branch of their researches.

Mechanics' Institute.

One of the most important and most useful of the objects which the Society has in view, is the communication to the people of Asia of such of the modern improvements in machinery as may be applicable to their present situation. The surest method of attaining this object is to procure accurate models of the machinery in use in India, to make the knowledge of them as public as possible in England, and to induce all the great mechanical geniuses of the country to co-operate with the Society in the work in which they are engaged. The Committee have therefore taken measures, first, to procure from every part of Asia models of every machine which is used in that quarter of the globe, together with accurate descriptions of such models, a history of the different purposes for which they are employed, and a detailed account of the situation and circumstances of the country in which they are found, and of the religion, laws, manners, customs, character, and even prejudices of the people amongst whom they are used; secondly, to have the information they obtain respecting such machinery immediately published and circulated amongst those persons in England who are the most conversant with and interested in the subject; and, thirdly, to open an easy and rapid communication between the Society and the different Mechanics' Institutes in Great Britain, which are composed of the greatest number of the most distinguished mechanical geniuses that were ever collected together in any part of the world. What the Committee have done upon the first point may be seen by a reference to the models which are already deposited in the Museum, and to the descriptions which have been obtained from the India-House of those models which are deposited in the library of the East-India Company. What they have done upon the second point may be seen by a reference to the first volume of the Register of Arts, which the Committee beg leave to offer to the Society in the name of the editor, who has already entered with great readiness into their views upon this subject, and intends from time to time in his future volumes to devote a portion of his very valuable journal to descriptions and drawings of all such machines as are in use in India, having already given, to the public in the present volume, a description of the different machines that are in use in Ceylon, the models of which were brought to England by Sir Alexander Johnston in 1809, at the time he proposed to his Majesty's Government to adopt a measure relative to the state of machinery on that island, similar to the one which the Committee have now adopted with respect to the state of machinery in every part of Asia. What the Committee have done upon the third point, may be seen by a reference to the communications which have passed between Sir Alexander Johnston and Dr. Birkbeck, who is acquainted with the leading members of every Mechanics' Institute in England, and has promised that, as soon as he has obtained the necessary information, he will

lay before the Committee a comparative view of the state of machinery in England and in India, and will point out to the Committee what portion of the improvements which have been made in the former, may, in his opinion, be introduced into the latter with advantage to the people of the country, and without militating in any way against their religion, laws, manners, customs, and prejudices.

IN INDIA.

The Committee have opened a correspondence with the Governor-General, the three subordinate Governors of the Company's territories, the King's Governors of the Isle of France and Ceylon, the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, the Literary Societies of Bombay, Madras, and Ceylon, and with many distinguished literary characters in Asia; and have taken measures for establishing Committees of Correspondence at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Penang, Ceylon, and in the Isle of France, and for encouraging the natives of the country, as well as the civil and military servants of the Crown and the East-India Company, to become members of those committees. The communications which the Committee have recently received from India, shew the great advantage which the Society may derive from the civil and military servants of the East-India Company, and from the natives of India, as corresponding members of the Society. Captain Low has forwarded from Penang to the Society, a MS. copy of his English translation of the Siamese laws; a work which, from the insight it affords the public into the manners of the Siamese people, and into the customs of their country, is, considering the political and commercial relations which exist between Great Britain and the Burmese empire, of considerable importance, not only in a literary, but also in a political point of view. As the Committee know the active and laborious duties in which Captain Low was officially engaged under the Penang government, at the time he collected the Siamese laws, and translated them into English, they are fully aware of the value which ought to be attached to his zeal and perseverance in favour of literary researches; and hope that the aid which he will receive from the local government of Penang will enable him to extend his researches into the laws and literature of the Burmese, and adjoining nations, and to publish the valuable Grammar which he has prepared of the Siamese Language. Radhacant Deb, a native of rank and influence in Bengal, and a Vice-president of the Agricultural Society at Calcutta, has addressed from Calcutta a letter of which the annexed is a copy (see note 4), to Sir A. Johnston, as Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence. The subject to which the letter relates, the depth of thought it displays, and the English style in which it is written, do great credit to Radhacant Deb's talents and knowledge of the English language, and afford his countrymen a bright example for them to follow in cultivating their understandings, and becoming acquainted with the literature of Europe. The Committee therefore feel it their duty to submit, through their Chairman, to the Society, for

confirmation, the resolutions in favour of Captain Low and Radhacant Deb, of which the annexed are copies. (See note 5.)

Although the Committee have turned their attention in general to all the subjects to which the views of the Society are directed, they have more particularly directed their inquiries to two subjects, the investigation of which is so much facilitated by the acquisition of territory which the British Government has made within the last twenty years. The one is, the history of those descendants of the Arab tribes, who profess different modifications of the Mahomedan religion, and are established along the whole of the sea-coast of India; the other, the history of the numerous nations who profess different modifications of the Buddha religion, and are established in the North and East of Asia, and on the island of Ceylon.

The first of these subjects embraces the history of the descendants of those Arabs who, either from a desire of trade or of propagating their religion, have from time to time, during the last ten centuries of the Christian era, formed establishments on the eastern coast of Africa, from Babelmandel to Mozambique; on the Comoro Islands; on the north-west coast of Madagascar; on the whole west, south, and east coast of the peninsula of India, from the Gulph of Cambay on one side, to the mouths of the river Gauges on the other; on the sea-coast of the whole circumference of Ceylon; on the Laccadive and Maldive Islands; on the north coast of Sumatra, and on many other islands in the Indian seas. These people retain the Arab features of their ancestors, and profess the Mahomedan religion, although they have in many instances adopted the language and some of the customs of the several nations amongst whom they reside. They in general are small capitalists, and carry on the retail trade of the country; they are, however, sometimes very large capitalists, very extensive merchants, very great proprietors of ships, and are very actively engaged in extensive commercial speculations between their respective countries and every part of India, Persia, and Arabia. A few of them are skilful navigators; many of them are the best practical sailors of all the different natives of Asia who navigate the Indian seas; and most of them have a set of maritime and commercial usages, according to which, disputes between themselves relative to maritime and commercial questions are decided by arbitrators of their own class and religious persuasion. The Committee look for information, with respect to such of these people as inhabit the sea-coast of the peninsula of India, of the island of Ceylon, and of the Laccadive and Maldive Islands, from the King's and East-India Company's civil and military servants who are in authority in the neighbourhood of those coasts; and with respect to such of them as inhabit the eastern coasts of Africa,* the Comoro Islands,

* Captain Owen, the brother of Sir Edward Owen, the present Commander-in-chief of the naval forces in India, collected during the survey which he some time ago made of the whole of the eastern coast of Africa, from Babelmandel north to Mozambique south, many very valuable memoirs relative to the different Mahomedan nations who have settlements along that coast. Captain Owen with the greatest liberality

and Madagascar, from Sir Charles Colville,* the governor of the Isle of France, and from many of the French inhabitants of that island. These Colonists have for a series of years evinced a strong feeling in favour of intellectual improvement, and researches into every branch of knowledge, literature, and natural history, by keeping up, both while they were under the French, and since they have been under the British Government, one of the best colleges for the education of their youth, and one of the best botanical gardens for the rearing of foreign plants, which are to be met with in any of the British possessions to the East of the Cape of Good Hope; and are inhabitants of an island, the name of which is associated in the history of the politics, the wars, the trade, the navigation, and the botany of India, with the distinguished names of La Bourdonnais, Dupleix, De Poivre, Commerçon, Gentil, Sonnerat, Flacourt, and Rochon; and the geographical situation of which is peculiarly well adapted for researches relative to the state of those descendants of the Arabs who are settled on the eastern coast of Africa and the African islands, and who, from deriving their origin from the same race of people, from professing the same religion, and carrying on the same description of trade as those Mahomedans who are settled along the coast of Asia, bear so much resemblance to them, as to render any information relative to the history of the one, very useful in elucidating the history of the other.

The second of the subjects to which the Committee have adverted embraces the history of those people who profess the principles of the Buddha religion in Tartary, Thibet, Nepaul, the Burmese and Siamese territories, Cambodia, Laos, China, Cochin China, Japan, and the island of Ceylon. The Committee look for information, with respect to such of them as inhabit Tartary, China, Cochin China, and Japan, from the Russian University at Casan, the Russian College at Peking, and from the Chinese libraries of Sir George Staunton † and Dr. Morrison; and

sent, previous to his departure for Fernando Po, the whole of these memoirs to Sir Alex. Johnston, in order that he might peruse them and communicate to the Royal Asiatic Society any part of the information they contained which he might think proper.

* Sir Charles Colville, while Commander-in-chief at Bombay, made a tour through different parts of India, and became thoroughly acquainted with the local peculiarities and the native inhabitants of the country. Mrs. Blair, the lady of Colonel Blair, Sir Charles's Military Secretary, who accompanied the Colonel on his tour, has taken very beautiful drawings of many of the places which she visited. As these drawings give an accurate view of some of the most classical and remarkable places which are mentioned in the history of India, it is to be hoped, for the benefit of all those who are interested in oriental history and oriental researches, that Mrs. Blair may be induced to allow them to be published.

† Sir George Staunton, both while he held a high office in the service of the East-India Company and while he acted as one of his Majesty's Commissioners in China, shewed the possibility of uniting the strictest attention to the duties of a public office with the most ardent zeal for acquiring a knowledge of the language and literature of the Chinese, and made, during his residence in China, the large and valuable collection of Chinese books (consisting of 2,600 vols.) which he some time ago presented to the Royal Asiatic Society. As Mr. Huttman, the Secretary to this Committee, has acquired a very accurate knowledge of the Chinese language and literature, it is hoped he will have leisure, with the assistance of Sir George, to translate into English some of the most valuable of these works.

with respect to such of them as inhabit the Burmese and Siamese territories, Laos, and Cambodia, from Mr. Fullerton, the Governor of Penang, Captain Low, and the different civil and military servants and Christian missionaries who are established along the coast of Tenasserim, at Penang, Malacca, and Sincapore. Thibet is, to the people of the Buddha religion in the North, what Ceylon is to those in the South of Asia—the place to which they refer for authentic knowledge relative to that particular modification of the Buddha religion which they profess. The Committee, therefore, look for information, with respect to the doctrines of that form of it which prevails in Thibet and the Nepaul country, from Mr. Gardner, the Political Resident in Nepaul, and Mr. Hodgson, his very able assistant; and with respect to the doctrines of the same religion which prevail on the island of Ceylon, from the English translations of several Pali, Singalese, and Dutch manuscripts, which were made by order of Sir Alexander Johnston,* while President of his Majesty's Council on Ceylon, from the several civil and military servants and Christian missionaries on that island, and more particularly from the Dutch and native inhabitants of the country, who, judging from the intellectual activity and local knowledge which they have invariably displayed in the exercise of those political privileges with which they have been invested by his present Majesty since 1811, are highly qualified, if properly encouraged, for making researches into the history and antiquities of their country, and procuring for the Society such information as may be derived from the numerous Pali and Cingalese works,† which are preserved by

* These consist of:—

First. The English translations of the answers given in Cingalese by several of the most learned of the Buddha priests and other literary characters on Ceylon, to questions which were officially submitted to them by Sir Alex. Johnston, while president of his Majesty's Council in Ceylon, relative to the history and doctrine of the Buddha religion as professed by the followers of Buddha on that island.

Secondly. English translations of the Cingalese works called the Mahavansie, the Rajah Valle, and the Rajah Ratnakari, which were reported to Sir Alex. Johnston by the Buddha priests, whom he had officially consulted upon the subject, to be in their opinion the most authentic histories which they possessed of their religion and their country from the earliest times to the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Thirdly. The English translation of the whole of that volume of Valentyn's history of the Dutch possessions in India which relates to the island of Ceylon.

Fourthly. English translations of a great many papers written by several Dutch inhabitants of Ceylon in Dutch at different times during the whole of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries relative to the history of the Buddha religion and the people of Ceylon.

All the translations from the Cingalese and Pali languages into English were either made or revised by the late Rajah Paxie, who was one of the best Sanscrit, Pali, and Cingalese scholars amongst the natives of Ceylon, and held for a great many years the office of Maha-Modliar, or chief of the cinnamon department on that island. He was the native chief of whom Sir Alex. Johnston has presented an engraving to the Society.

† Some of these books relate to the systems of astronomy, astrology, geography, cosmography, and medicine, which prevail among the people of Ceylon, but most of them to the history and doctrine of

the priests of the Buddha religion in many of the Buddha temples that are situated in the interior and the southern division of the island. The Committee consider it to be a most fortunate circumstance for the Society in particular, and for the cause of Oriental literature in general, that their researches in Ceylon will be assisted and directed by Colonel Colebrooke, a near relative of the learned Director of the Society, and a Parliamentary Commissioner on that island, who is one of the original founders of the Society, and who, during many years of his civil and military career, in different parts of India and Java, has eminently distinguished himself, as well by the knowledge he acquired of the people and the countries of Asia, as by the humanity, liberality, and philanthropy with which his public measures and private conduct were marked, in every civil and military office which he has held, either under the Crown or the East-India Company.

ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE.

Some sovereigns on the continent of Europe have for centuries encouraged amongst their subjects the study of the languages, the history, the geography, the antiquities, and the literature of Asia; have established professorships of Oriental literature at their respective universities, and have sent, at a considerable expense, many of the most distinguished men in the country, to different parts of the world, for the express purpose of prosecuting Oriental researches, and collecting for the public libraries of their respective nations scarce and valuable works, in all the different languages of the East. Other sovereigns of Europe, though from the political changes which have taken place in their respective countries, they do not at present feel so great an interest as they formerly did in the subject, yet have nevertheless preserved with care, as well amongst the public archives of the country, as in their public and private libraries, valuable information, in manuscript and in print, relative to the state and the people of India during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Russia, from the extent of Northern Asia, which is directly under her dominion,

the Buddha religion. Sir Alex. Johnston, in consequence of the official intercourse which he always kept up with the principal Buddha priests on the island of Ceylon, obtained from them in 1808 the very detailed catalogue of these works which he some time ago gave to the Society.

He had also in 1808 copies made of between five and six hundred of the most valuable of these works, all of which were unfortunately lost in the *Lady Jane Dundas*, in which he had sent them to England in 1809. As the originals are an object of literary curiosity he is about to have other copies of them made on the island of Ceylon, which he means as soon as he can procure them to present to the Society.

The only work of the whole collection which he preserved is a complete copy of the *Pansiyapayenas-jatakaya*, which he brought home with him in 1818, and which he has given to the library of the Society. As a complete copy of this work is the most difficult to be procured of any of the works on the Buddha religion, and as it contains the most authentic account of the whole of the doctrines of that religion, Sir Alexander has taken measures to have an English translation made of it for the use of the Society.

from the intercourse which she keeps up with the whole of Tartary and with the northern provinces of China, from the Asiatic descent of a considerable portion of her subjects, from the various Oriental languages which are spoken by them, and from the different modifications of the Buddha and Mahomedan religions which influence their moral and religious opinions, has not only an interest in all literary researches which relate to the northern and eastern parts of Asia, but is enabled, from her local situation and the nature of her government, to carry them on at less expense, and with more success, than any other nation in Europe. Catharine II., while in the plenitude of her power, from a desire to promote, by her influence, every object of science and literature, and to ascertain upon a more extensive plan than was ever attempted before, the analogies and affinities of all the languages of the world, procured, through the late Professor Pallas, in answer to instructions drawn up by herself, under the advice of the ablest and most profound philosophers and philologists of the age, very minute and authentic information relative to the different languages, dialects, and idioms, which were either spoken or known in any part of her immense dominions. The only portion of this information which is still incomplete, is that which relates to the numerous languages which prevail in those divisions of Asia which are at present either under the government or the influence of Great Britain.

The Royal Asiatic Society, through the civil and military servants of the East-India Company, and the Christian missionaries who are established in every part of India, and who have acquired a knowledge of the various languages which are spoken throughout the British territories, possess at this moment a facility which no other society enjoys, for completing, in as far as it relates to the south of Asia, the grand and enlightened plan which was originally commenced and carried into effect by Catharine II., in as far as it relates to the north and east of Asia. The Committee of Correspondence have therefore opened a communication upon this subject, through Prince Lieven, with the present Emperor of Russia, and are happy to report, that his Imperial Majesty has, through the Prince, as appears by the Prince's letters to Sir Alex. Johnston, not only agreed to assist the Society in the attainment of its objects generally, but has also been graciously pleased to present to it copies of all the works relative to the different languages of Russia, which were compiled under the orders of Catharine II., and were printed by her Imperial Majesty for private circulation.

Germany has of late years evinced the greatest zeal in procuring information from every quarter of the globe, relative to the history, the literature, and the sciences of Asia. Austria has an Oriental academy at Vienna, and may be of considerable use to Oriental researches, by means of the Oriental manuscripts which she possesses in the libraries of Vienna, Milan, and Venice, and by the patronage which she may afford to a continuation of Von Hammer's celebrated work, the "*Fundgruben des Orients*." Prussia has shewn herself a friend to Oriental literature, by the encouragement which she has given to Professors Bopp and Rosen; by the liberality with

which she has promoted the study of Sanscrit at the University of Bonn; by the appointment to that University of A. W. Von Schlegel, who is one of the best Sanscrit scholars of the present age; and finally, by the high respect which she shews to Baron Wm. Humboldt, whose philosophical inquiries into the grammatical construction of Oriental languages, has at once proved the extent of his philosophical genius and the value of his philological inquiries. Bavaria, by the choice which she has made of Dr. Rückert for the Oriental Professorship at the University of Erlangen, by the disinterested manner in which she has enabled Professors Bopp and Frank to carry on their Oriental studies in France and in England, and to complete their Sanscrit grammars, has conferred a benefit on those who make a study of Oriental literature.

Holland, by having established at Batavia the first literary society that was ever formed in Asia, for investigating the literature and science of that part of the globe, by having encouraged the works on botany and natural history of Van Rheede, Burman, Linnæus,* and Rumphius; by having patronized and assisted with the whole influence of her government, Valentyn's valuable history of the Dutch East-India possessions, is entitled to the very first place amongst those nations who have promoted the acquisition of knowledge relative to Asia.

Portugal, from having been the first European power which ever had any permanent establishments in India, possesses amongst her records many valuable memoirs relative to the state of the people of that country, during a great part if not the whole of the sixteenth century.

Spain, from having been so long the seat of the Mohammedan kingdoms of Seville and Cordova, at a time when those kingdoms were famed for the encouragement which they gave to every branch of literature, contains in her public and private libraries valuable information relative to all those branches of literature and science which were known by the Mohammedans in Spain, and at Bagdad during the most remarkable period of their history, and which are intimately connected with the different branches of literature and science which still prevail throughout many parts of Asia.

Rome, from being the seat of the College of the Propaganda, and the depository of the reports which were made by the Jesuit, and all the other Catholic Missionaries in India, during the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, affords much information relative to the people of India which cannot be procured from any other source in Europe or Asia. France, from the very early encouragement which she gave to the study of Oriental literature; from the value and the number of the Oriental works in her libraries; from her early intercourse with Siam; from the able men she has had in her different factories in Asia Minor; from the researches made by La Bourdonnais and Dupleix, into every branch of the trade and politics of India; from the works of Commerçon, Lechenaade de la Tour, and Gentil, on the science

* Linnæus, besides his other great works on natural history, wrote the *Flora Zeylanica*.

and natural history of India and the Indian seas ; from the knowledge acquired by the French Institute, while in Egypt, relative to that country and its connection with Asia ; and finally, from her having established at Paris a society, whose sole object is to carry on researches relative to the literature and science of Asia, must be considered as one of the most able and efficient coadjutors, which the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland can have, in prosecuting the researches for which it was instituted.

For these reasons, the Committee have already opened a communication with some of the governments, and with many of the most distinguished characters on the continent of Europe ; and have received from all of them the most encouraging assurances of co-operation and literary assistance. Monsieur Falck,* Baron Bülow, Count Ludolf, Count Moltke, and Baron Cetto, the Ministers at the British Court, from the Netherlands, Prussia, Naples, Denmark, and Bavaria, will procure for the Society an accurate account of all the collections of Oriental manuscripts in Prussia, Naples, Rome, Denmark, Bavaria, the Netherlands, the archives of the late Dutch East-India Company, the island of Java, and all the Dutch possessions in Asia. Count Funchal, the Minister of Portugal at Rome, will draw up for the Society a *précis* of all the information which the Portuguese possess relative to Asia ; and Lord Stuart de Rothsay, the English Ambassador at Rome, will, as soon as his Portuguese manuscripts are arranged, allow the Committee to look over such of them as relate to the different Portuguese settlements in the East-Indies.

With respect to France, the Committee beg leave to report, that they have on every occasion received the most ready, and most material assistance from Prince Polignac, the French ambassador at this Court ; and that they feel it their duty, in referring the Society to the letter, of which the annexed is a translation (See Note 6), from Mons. Abel Remusat to Sir Alexander Johnston, most particularly to call the attention of the Society to the very cordial and friendly manner in which the Duke of Orleans, as President of the Asiatic Society at Paris, and all the Members of that Society, received the communication which Sir Alexander Johnston made to them upon the subject of Mr. Daniell's proposal to publish, under the patronage of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, his very valuable collection of drawings of different parts of India.

* Monsieur Falck is descended from a family whose services in India have been productive of the greatest benefit to the Dutch East-India possessions, and is a cousin of the late Dutch Governor of the Island of Ceylon, William Emanuel Falck, whose name is still revered on that island, and is invariably associated in the minds of the natives of the country with the idea of the most impartial justice and the purest integrity. Sir Alexander Johnston, out of respect to the memory of this great man, has presented to the Royal Asiatic Society a very interesting drawing, in which Governor Falck is represented as signing, in the presence of his Council and the Candian ambassadors, the treaty of 1766, by which the King of Candia ceded to the Dutch East-India Company the whole circumference of the island of Ceylon, the acquisition of which had been the principal object of their policy from the time they first got possession of that island.

The Committee also beg leave to report that they have, in carrying on their foreign communications with different persons and governments on the continent of Europe, derived great assistance from many foreigners who are members of the Committee, and that they have therefore, with their permission, appointed three of them to be their foreign Secretaries: Dr. Rosen, the pupil of the celebrated Professor Bopp at Berlin, and Professor of Oriental languages at the London University, to be their Sanscrit and German Secretary; Dr. Dorn, a distinguished Persian and Arabic scholar, to be their Persian and Arabic Secretary; and Monsieur Cæsar Moreau, the French Vice Consul in England, and the author of many valuable works on the Statistics and Commerce of Great Britain and France, to be their French Secretary.

The Committee have taken measures for procuring detailed accounts of the different articles of which the collection in the Museum of the Society is composed; and they have reason to hope that several persons, who are well acquainted with the nature of those articles, will soon lay before the Society such descriptions of them, as may enable the public to derive much information from the Museum, relative to those parts of Oriental history to which the Society have directed their inquiries.

NOTES.

NOTE 1.

Copy of a Letter from the Rev. Professor Lee to Sir Alexander Johnston, Knt.

DEAR SIR:

London, April 17, 1837.

I now proceed to lay before you a more detailed account of what I believe ought to be done, and what, I think, the Royal Asiatic Society can do, towards improving the state of Oriental literature in this country. But, perhaps, it will be best to state, in the first place, the situation in which we now are, and then to proceed to suggest the remedy. I shall be particular on the Arabic and Persic only, because the detail would be too long to do so in every case; and I shall begin with the Arabic. In this department, then, a tolerable grammar has never yet made its appearance in this country. The work of Richardson is meagre in the extreme, and better calculated to set the learner out wrong, and to keep him so, than to benefit him in acquiring the Arabic language. The admirable works of Colonel Baillie and Mr. Lumsden are unfinished, and likely to remain so. In this case the learner must have recourse either to the *Grammaire Arabe* of M. de Sacy, or to one of the grammars published in Latin by the Catholic missionaries; in the latter of which, however, he will have the mortification to find very great defects, and, in some cases, views on the subject quite foreign to the genius of that language. M. de Sacy has supplied many of the deficiencies, and corrected many of the errors of preceding writers on Arabic grammar, but valuable as his work is, it leaves something to be desired through the omission of the prosody, and his paradigm of the verb does not quite agree with the views of the Arabian grammarians. In the Latin grammar of Guadagnoli, indeed, a prosody is to be found, but this is full of mistakes, as Clarke has shewn. If he have recourse to the work of Mr. Gladwin on this subject, he will here find endless difficulties. The only work of much value on this subject, is the little book published by Clarke at Oxford,

about 150 years ago. But this requires the greatest stretch of attention to understand the rules, and of principles, nothing is said. It is surely much to be regretted, that we have no good elementary work of this kind in English: and still more so to find that there is not the least prospect of having one, until some step be taken, either by the Royal Asiatic Society, or some other body capable of bearing the expenses incident to such an undertaking.

In the next place, what have we in lexicography? If we except the lexicons of Golius and Castell, we have nothing we can recommend as a general dictionary. Wilmet, indeed, has compiled a very useful work for a few particular books: but then that work is scarce, not to insist on its uselessness in a general way. But this objection will go in a great degree against the lexicons of Golius, Castell, the Kāmoos, and the Soorah; for in these we find scarcely one of the terms of art, without which hardly a single book in Arabic can be made out. Were it necessary here to go into the detail, I could shew, that scarcely a translator is to be named, from Pococke down to the present day, who has not had his labour greatly increased through the omission of technical terms in those dictionaries. This remark extends to every science, to works on theology, and even to the commonest expressions in use among the Arabians. Again, let a man take any book of poetry, or of proverbial expressions, such as the work of Meidani, and try his hand with any of the dictionaries just mentioned. I have no doubt he will make out a sense; but, very likely, a sense quite different from that intended by the author. If Meninski is substituted for these lexicographers, then I believe he would find himself infinitely more bewildered. Here we have nothing to point out the construction of the verbs, the several conjugations in which they are found, or the senses they bear in these conjugations. Many of the words are erroneously explained: and in every case we have a “rudis indigestaque moles.” Dr. Wilkins’s edition of Richardson’s Persian and Arabic dictionary is a very great improvement of that work, but I venture to suggest it would be best to have separate dictionaries of each. That few should be found to understand the Arabic and Persian, with helps like these, is certainly not to be wondered at; the wonder is, how any thing has been made out. The French and German literati have felt this in all its weight, and have very properly betaken themselves to the scholiasts and vocabularies containing the terms of art, and to the native grammarians and commentators on grammar, and hence have found, what they could find no where else, their progress to be solid and delightful.

In the next place, what can we be said to know of Oriental history, I mean Arabic and Persian, if we except the works of Pococke, Reiske and a few others? In the Persian, not so much as one historian has yet been printed or translated: and yet our libraries abound with the most valuable works, reserved only for worms’-meat, or to go back into their native element the dust! The histories of Persia, its dynasties and wars, of Hindustan, of Tartary, and other adjacent countries, are shewn in our libraries, just as “our rarer monsters are,” merely to excite the surprise of the ignorant.

Then, of Arabian and Persian poetry, and the belles-lettres, how much do we know? We have, indeed, a few elegant extracts printed at Calcutta, for which the Honourable East-India Company deserves the thanks of the country,* but how are they to be made out? Will any one attempt to make out the

* It is not meant to be averred, that great praise is not due to the Honourable East India Company, for the great patronage and support which they have afforded to Oriental literature. To their servants, Europe is entirely indebted for a knowledge of the Sanscrit, and for the publication of many valuable works in that language—for a splendid and accurate edition of the Kāmoos, the Soorah, the Burhānī Kātib, the five books on Arabic grammar the Sharh Molla Jāmi, a valuable edition of the works of Sādi, the Life of Timour, the Makāmāt of Haūri, the Hidāya, with an English translation, the Deewānī Hāfiz, the Dabistānī Madhāhib, the valuable Persian selections, forming the Class-books of the College of Fort William—all that is known of the Hindustānī, a splendid and valuable Chinese Dictionary and Grammar, and the translations of some books of History, Tales, and Poetry, with a great variety of other works, in almost every department.

Deewan of Motanabbi, or of Khājah Hāfiz, with the assistance of the dictionaries of Golius, &c.? If he does, I will only say, he will attempt to do that, in which no one ever yet did, or ever shall, succeed; and of this, after a short trial, I think he will be perfectly convinced. If he means to do any thing likely to satisfy himself, or to benefit mankind, he must recur to the native commentaries, or, which is nearly the same thing, he must have a learned native at his elbow. But suppose an individual hardy enough to get through all these difficulties, and to publish the result of his labours for the benefit of others; suppose him to have laboured for years, to translate some valuable and interesting work, and then suppose him to print it for the benefit of mankind: what must now be his mortification to find, that he can perhaps sell six copies; and that he must labour for years to pay the debts he has contracted in printing and publishing his book? If a man will suppose this, he will suppose nothing more than has more than once taken place, and which will perhaps induce him to believe, that few individuals will ever think of labouring to this extent, and fewer still of giving to the world the result of their labours.

What has here been stated with reference to Arabian and Persian literature few will perhaps undertake to deny; and if so, when we consider our connections with the East, particularly in a mercantile point of view, I think all must be convinced, that there exists a necessity, that something should be done on a more liberal scale than has hitherto been attempted. I will now point out a list of works that may be printed or translated, or both, with a view to meet the deficiencies just noticed, not intending to intimate that others equally valuable may not also be mentioned, but only to shew that these difficulties need not necessarily exist.

Arabic Grammar.

Ibn ul Hājeb, with the Commentary of Moola Jami, and of Najmodden of Irak

The Alfia of Ibn Mālik—Ibn Farhat, &c.

The Mozhir ul Lughat, by Soyuti. The works of Akhfash, &c.

Taarifat, or Terms of Art. Jawhari's Lexicon, Scholia on the Poets, &c. Prosody.

Poetry and Belles-Lettres.

The Scholia of Sharishi, of Taj Oddeen Ibn Ilyas, of Motarezzi, &c. on Hariri.

The Makamāt of Ibn ul Juzi, with Scholia.

The Makamāt of Hamadani, with ditto.

The Makamāt of Soyūti, with ditto.

Scholia on the Deewān of Motanabbi.

Scholia on the Deewan of Ibn Doreid, in addition to those printed by Haitsma.

Scholia on the Hamasa, of which Col. Baillie has a good copy.

Tales in verse and prose, of which there is great abundance.

History.

The Golden Meadows of Masoudi—the Mobtada wa Khabar, of Ibn Khaldoun. Lives of the Poets, &c. by Ibn Khalikan. The Biographia Meccana. History of the famous Men in Spain. El Wākedī's Conquest of Syria. The Tarikh Tabari.* El Jabarti's account of the French war in Egypt. Ditto by a Syrian. Histories of ancient Arabia, Persia, &c. El Damiri's Natural History. Ditto by Cazwini. Macrizi's Egypt. Edrisi's Geography complete. Ditto by Abulfeda, Yakūti's Dictionary, &c. Travels of Ibn Batuta, &c. Visits to places of pilgrimage, &c., with Translations from the Greek authors, some of which may perhaps be restored.

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PERSIAN.

Geography and Lexicography.

Commentaries on Persian Grammar. Sorooree's Poetical Dictionary. Scholia on the Poets generally.

* About to be published by Kosegarten.

History.

The Rauzat Ossafa, the National History of Persia. The Tarikhi Alam Arai on the reign of Mirza Abbas. Histories of the several dynasties in Persia, India, &c., such as of Jengiskhan, Timour, the Life of Akbar, and other emperors of Hindustan. The whole of Ferishta.* Translations from the Turkish, Tartar, Sanscrit, &c., which, according to the editor of the Life of Baber, must soon perish unless collected and printed. Lives of the Poets, by Doulatshāh, &c. Natural History, by Cazwini, &c.

Poetry, &c.

A good translation of the Anvari Soheili, for the use of learners.

A good translation of the works of Sadi, ditto.

Deewan of Khakani, with scholia.

Deewan of Anwari, with ditto.

Works of Nizāmi, Jami, Hāfiz, &c., with ditto.

Similar lists may be made out with reference to the Turkish, the Armenian, Syriac, Ethiopic, Chinese, and Sanscrit, and to the dialects of India, the Pali, the Cingalese, the Burman, the Malay, the Javanese, &c. &c., were it necessary.

Let us now proceed to consider in what way such works as these may be executed under the patronage of the Royal Asiatic Society. It was suggested by my correspondent, in the Cambridge paper of March 16,† that needy Arabs and Persians may probably be employed in furthering the progress of such works. I believe this is practicable, for the following reasons.

There is in Persia at this time a predilection so strong in favour of English literature, that, I believe, a dozen learned men, if they were wanted, might be easily induced to come and settle in this country, at least for a time. This has been exemplified in the case of the Mirza Ibrahim, who is now at Haileybury; for, to my certain knowledge, he came here without the least prospect of wealth whatever, and expressed his willingness, when he joined me at Cambridge, to give his labour for a considerable time on the most liberal terms. But, as this was more than I could promise him, and as the East-India Company expressed a wish to have him at their College, I was content to part with him, and he accepted of a salary of £200 a year, with lodging, &c. for the first year, which was to be a year of trial; I have no doubt, therefore, that others would be induced to come over on terms equally easy. Now, as to the Arabs, I believe the same may be done. I myself have had letters from learned Arabs, both in Egypt and Palestine, soliciting employment; and one of these persons, I have reason to believe, has since been employed in the capacity of a translator and teacher. I believe, therefore, that there would be no want of help from these quarters, and these would be sufficient perhaps to make the trial upon.

In reducing this to practice, I should certainly advise to begin on a small scale. In the first case, perhaps, no one need be sent for. The Mirza Ibrahim, I have no doubt, would be willing to occupy his vacations, and vacant time during the period of lectures, in conjunction with an Orientalist, in some work of this description; and, indeed, I have heard him say, that it is his wish to do so. If then the Society thought it worth while to make the experiment on a small scale, perhaps this would be an advisable plan; and, in this case, one of the Professors at Haileybury, &c. may be associated with him. If they should wish also to try the Arabic, no doubt Mr. Salt would engage a Moollah for a short time, and at a reasonable rate, who may be associated with some gentleman, in London or elsewhere, to superintend such work. Perhaps a person acquainted with English might be engaged; but, if not, that is of little consequence, the parties would soon be able to understand one another. In this event, I think the Universities would not be unwilling to assist in the article of printing, as they have certain privileges in this respect not possessed by others. I certainly would do all in my power to do the needful at Cambridge; and I have

* Col. Briggs's translation of this work is now in the press.

† This correspondence follows this letter.

reason to believe, that there is a feeling there in favour of this project; and Oxford would probably join.

I hope it will not be thought that I have any wish to make myself important in this business. I only wish to see something done; and shall be most willing to further any project likely to do so, as far as my slender means and abilities will go. Much I cannot promise; but the little I can do shall be done cheerfully.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your's very faithfully,

SAMUEL LEE.

Correspondence referred to in the preceding Letter. (From the Cambridge Chronicle, March 16, 1827.)

To the Rev. Professor Lee.

SIR: The influence which you possess in the community of letters, not only from your distinguished situation among a body itself highly eminent for talent and enlightenment, but also from your own personal attainments, point you out to me as the person, above all others, to whom I would publicly address a few thoughts on the present state of Oriental learning.

You are well aware that the literature of the East is of great extent and great value; that the treasures which have been hitherto explored have furnished us with specimens of the most polished and elevated poetry, and the most ingenious and beautiful fiction; with much that is valuable and single in history, and much in science that even now is curious and useful; nor, in the present state of scientific improvement, are we to forget that we derived from the East those extensive and generalized principles of calculation which have conducted to the proudest triumphs of philosophy. Yet it is no less certain that the great field of Hindoo, Persian, Arabic, and Chinese literature, has been very imperfectly explored. Even the libraries of Europe, especially those of Spain, comprise a far greater number of Oriental MSS. than have ever been studied; or, at least, communicated to the literary world. But these again are a mere speck, in comparison with the vast treasures of the East itself. Amidst all these MSS., many, doubtless, are of little intrinsic worth; but it still will remain certain that an immense ocean of knowledge is floating around us, which, like the waters which eluded the grasp of Tantalus, is for ever escaping our thirst. And what may not this knowledge be? Details on the population of the ancient world; particulars of those nations with whom the Greeks acquaint us incorrectly, and the Hebrews imperfectly; and translations of the lost Greek and Roman authors, which we know the Arabians of Europe frequently made. The entire history of Livy is, perhaps, latent in some European library, among the neglected and perishing treasures of Eastern knowledge. The theory of Egyptian hieroglyphics, in illustrating which the most logical and discriminating minds have hitherto laboured with small, though wonderful success, is perhaps placed beyond the province of conjecture in some Arabian or Ethiopian treatise.

That such probabilities should not have been fathomed, seems a reproach to the literary world, but most of all to this country, whose power and possessions in the East are so considerable, and whose learning and opportunities point her out as the most effective instrument in promoting the great result. But it may be said, what can she do? Has she not her colleges and her professors, both here and in India; and is not the work itself proceeding, although with a slowness proportioned to its extent? But the labourers are too few, nor are they of the class required. Dr. Wait, I am told, is now making a descriptive catalogue of the Oriental MSS. in the University library: his fine talents are employed in an object of the highest use. But what if this object be attainable with equal certainty, greater celerity, and the expenditure of less valuable time than that of such a scholar as Dr. Wait? What if the attainment of this object depended not on the will and taste of individuals, but be made the subject of a system which will compel its end? What if its promotion be not confined to the walls of an university, but extend through the whole of the British possessions?

The method to which I invite your notice carries with it a better authority than my own. It was recommended by Bishop Watson forty years ago, and it is astonishing that it has excited so little attention. "It is a work," says he, "worthy of the attention of all the universities in Europe, to undertake the translation of the Oriental MSS. which we are at present possessed of. Men skilled in these languages should be invited from every quarter, formed into a kind of society, and employed for life, under the direction of proper persons, in the drudgery of translation. Nothing worthy of notice in this way can be expected from the detached labours of a few professors of Hebrew or Arabic; men of liberal education cannot readily be brought to undertake such a task, and, if they could, the matter may be effected at a much easier expense by the labours of inferior persons. What would be an adequate reward for three or four needy Turks or Persians, would not be a proper stipend for one man of letters, who should be obliged annually to produce the fruits of his unremitting diligence." But, without entering into the particular manner of accomplishing this design, I cannot help being of opinion, that an institution established at Cambridge for the express purpose of translating and publishing Oriental MSS. would redound to the credit of the University, and tend to put the learned world in possession of a very valuable part of literature, of which, at present, we have but a very imperfect knowledge.

I shall not presume to suggest methods where the learned Bishop has been silent, but sure I am that the subject is well worthy mature consideration; and, effectively pursued, it would do honour to yourself, the University, the country, and even to the civilized world.

I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

A MEMBER OF THE SENATE.

To the Editor of the Cambridge Chronicle.

SIR: Having had the honour of being addressed by 'A Member of the Senate,' in your paper of the 16th instant, as to the means whereby the treasures, now hidden in our Oriental manuscripts, might be more generally made known among us, you will oblige me by allowing the following reply to appear in your next.

In the first place, then, I concur entirely with the opinions of this gentleman, that to bring to light these treasures could not but tend considerably to advance our knowledge on subjects of the greatest interest and moment, and that to devise some plan by which this could be effected, would be "a consummation devoutly to be wished."

It has been truly said by him, that the library of the Escorial contains vast treasures of this kind. I answer, our own library, since the acquisition of the MSS. of the late Mr. Burckhardt, and of several purchases made since his death—that of the British Museum, since the purchase of the valuable collection made by the late Mr. Rich—that of the Bodleian of Oxford, to which may be added a most valuable and extensive collection at the India House, present stores, perhaps, sufficiently extensive to satisfy the most sanguine inquirer on subjects of this kind. But, if not, access is to be had to the almost endless stores of the Vatican, the Imperial Library of Vienna, and the Royal Library of Paris; not to insist on the daily accessions made to our libraries by the importation of MSS. from the East.

That the resources are abundant, therefore, I think there can be no doubt, and that to bring their contents to light is desirable, perhaps there cannot be more than one opinion. But I may be allowed to say, that it is not to science only, or general information, that the most interesting accessions may be thus made; our knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures could not but be greatly advanced. The grammar, rhetoric, laws, customs, and manners of the Orientals contribute, as all allow, in an astonishing degree, towards elucidating the phraseology of the Bible; and, I am sure, it cannot be necessary here to shew that these means have never yet been drawn upon to any thing like the extent of their resources.

Again: from a collation and classification of all the Syriac MSS. found in this country, particularly

those preserved in Mr. Rich's collection,* our knowledge of Biblical criticism could not but be greatly advanced. But where, it may be asked, are we to look for an individual who can command time and funds necessary for such a work? Or, where for a market, provided it could be completed, likely to make returns sufficient to pay the printer? The voice of fame only is, I fear, much too languid to call forth adventurers of this kind; and this is perhaps, all that can be reasonably expected from labours such as these.

That such a consummation cannot be effected by the solitary labours of the Oriental professors in the Universities, the Member of the Senate has justly remarked. The public is, indeed, highly indebted to such men as Pococke, Hyde, Walton, and others, who have distinguished themselves in this career. But generally, official duties, the want of funds, and a bad market, will always be sufficient to present insurmountable obstacles to speculations of this kind. I believe, nevertheless, that something may be devised whereby these difficulties might be removed, and the interests of all likely to advance such an object, be effectually united. In the constitution of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, I think, we can find all the necessary requisites. We have, in this institution, the King for a patron, the President of the Board of Control for a president, the learned and indefatigable Mr. Colebrooke for a director, and for a body, men the most distinguished for their learning, candour, and talents, in this kingdom. I have reason to believe, that there is a feeling favourable to such a project as this, both in the Government and at the India House. Mr. Wynn, I understand, is anxious to do something towards advancing Oriental literature; and some of the Directors of the East-India Company have expressed a similar feeling. If, therefore, something feasible could be devised, there is reason to hope that funds would not be wanting.

In the next place, as the Member of the Senate has justly remarked, needy Arabs and Persians may be obtained from the East, and these, in conjunction with the professors of the Universities, or other Orientalists, whom a select committee of that Society might think proper to employ, would afford the best pledges that such works would be well chosen and correctly executed. The Universities, moreover, may not be averse to assist in the article of printing, which, I think, is probable, when works, recommended as these would be, were brought before them. And, again, as the Society above-mentioned is at present relying on the gratuitous assistance of its members for articles to compose the volumes of its Transactions, it is not improbable they may be disposed to listen to some such project as this.

I will add one consideration more, which is this. It must, I think, appear surprising, that a country like this, having such extensive and daily extending intercourse with the East, both in a religious and commercial point of view, should evince so little interest on a subject of such importance as the cultivation of Oriental literature; while on the Continent, there is not only a general interest excited and maintained, far beyond any thing witnessed in former times, but also the patronage of the several governments is actually afforded, for what, in their case, can amount to little more than the gratification of a literary curiosity.

I can only say, in conclusion, that it is my intention to lay this correspondence before one of the Vice-Presidents of the Royal Asiatic Society, with whom I have the honour of being acquainted, and should any thing eventually grow out of it, the public will have to thank the Member of the Senate for his communication.

I am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

SAMUEL LEE.

* Some of these MSS. are upwards of 1,000 years old, and others present most valuable portions of the Philoxenian or Nestorian, exemplars. I myself have made considerable progress in such a collation; but having already burnt my fingers in speculations of this kind, I am not over anxious to try the experiment again.

NOTE 2.

Royal Asiatic Society's House,
14, Grafton Street, Bond Street,
October 20, 1827.

To the Honourable the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Court of Directors of the
United East-India Company.

HONOURABLE SIRs : As your Honourable Court has ever been forward in promoting the interests of that extensive empire over which you preside, by the patronage of oriental literature, we beg leave to represent to your Honourable Court, that the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland has resolved, with the assistance of such of its members as are eminent for their knowledge of Asiatic languages, to translate and publish oriental works of general interest; and we, therefore, beg to solicit from your Honourable Court such assistance as it may be disposed to grant for the promotion of this object.

We have the honour to be, Honourable Sirs, your most obedient humble servants,

(Signed) H. T. COLEBROOKE.
G. T. STAUNTON,
E. H. EAST,
ALEX. JOHNSTON,
G. FITZCLARENCE.

NOTE 3.

SIR :

East-India House, 26th October 1827.

The Court of Directors of the East-India Company have had before them the letter addressed to them from the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland on the 20th instant; and I am commanded to acquaint you, that the Court have voted the sum of (£105) one hundred guineas, in aid of the Society's general funds; and that a subscription of the same amount will be contributed annually from this time during the Court's pleasure.

The donation now granted will be paid to any person whom the Society may authorize to receive it.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

J. DART, Secretary.

H. T. COLEBROOKE, Esq., &c. &c. &c.

NOTE 4.

Letter from Baboo Radhacant Deb to Sir Alexander Johnston, Knight, Chairman, the Deputy Chairmen, and the Committee of Correspondence of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

GENTLEMEN : With sentiments of respect, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a very kind letter from you, together with a copy of the Prospectus of the Society.

Your proposal to insert my name among your correspondents is most gratifying to me; and I beg to present my best and respectful thanks for the honour the Society intends conferring, which cannot but be highly acceptable to me.

Born and residing in such a country as this, where mechanical knowledge is very little cultivated, it cannot be expected that the natives should possess any elevated degree of knowledge in arts and manufactures, with the exception of what they are daily practising, the scanty remains of that which their forefathers have left, and the knowledge of which has descended through Mahomedan despotism and cruelty. As

your invitation is flattering, I will not, however, fail to make every opportunity of keeping awake our correspondence, connected with the sciences and polite literature of the Hindus.

The formation of societies for the promotion of the knowledge of science and literature in general, as well as of arts and manufactures, is beneficial to the country where such bodies are united; but when they link with similar societies, or individuals of talent, in other countries by correspondence, the benefit arising therefrom is universal, especially when those learned men communicate their ideas to one another without regard to nation or religion.

In this good work the Europeans have far surpassed other nations; and allow me to express my admiration of the plan the Society has adopted for the diffusion of knowledge, by opening a correspondence with the natives of Hindustan, who cannot but feel immeasurable pleasure and gratitude, at the conviction that their rulers, in common with your Society, are ever watchful to promote the welfare of the ruled, by the dissemination of the knowledge of literature and arts among them.

As the Report of the Calcutta Agricultural Society, of which I have the honour to be Vice-president, will soon be published, I need not give you an account of the same here.

Some time ago I published a Bengalee Spelling-book, in imitation of a similar useful work in English, by Mr. Lindley Murray, a copy of which, as well as a copy of the first volume of a copious Dictionary, entirely in Sanscrit, compiled by me, on the plan of an encyclopedia, I beg leave to send, and request the Society will have the goodness to give them a place in their library, allowing me at the same time permission to transmit the subsequent volumes, with the Preface and Appendix, when issued from the press.

Having lately had occasion to refer to the Agni Purana, I found a passage therein which convinced me that the division of the day and night into twenty-four hours, from midnight to midnight, by Europeans, is of Sanscrit origin; and as it may be a point deemed desirable to be known by many English gentlemen, I beg leave to transcribe the original, accompanied with a translation of it.

घटिके द्वे मुहूर्तः स्यात् तैस्त्रिंशत्या दिवानिशे १

चतुर्विंशति बेलाभिरहोरात्रं प्रचक्षते ॥

सूर्योदयादि विज्ञेयो मुहूर्तानां क्रमः सदा १

पश्चिमादर्द्धरात्रादि होराणां विद्यते क्रमः ॥

“ Ghatike dve Muhúrtah syát taistrinsatyá divá nise; Chaturvinsati Belábhír ahorátram prachashate.”

“ Sūryodayádi vijneyo Muhúrtánám cramah Sadá, Paschiniúd ard'ha rátrádi Horánám vidyate cramah.”

“ Two ghaticas make one muhurta, of which thirty make a day and night. Twenty-four belahs are said to constitute a day and night. It is to be remarked that the course of the muhurtas is invariably from sun-rise, and that of the horas from midnight.”

The interpretation of the above two quatrains is this; that thirty muhúrtas are equal to a day and night, which two are comprised in twenty-four belás or horas, and that the computation of day and night by thirty muhurtas is from sun-rise to sun-rise, and that by twenty-four belas or horas from midnight to midnight. Hence it appears that the word hour is probably derived from the Sanscrit term horá, especially when the exact correspondence of the latter with the Greek and the Latin hora is considered.

Wishing you success in your benevolent exertions towards effecting the objects of your interesting Society, I remain, with due respect and regard, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

RADHACANT DEB.

Calcutta, the 20th of May 1827.

NOTE 5.

Extracts from the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Committee of Correspondence of the Royal Asiatic Society.

March 8th, 1828.

Sir Alexander Johnston, Chairman of the Committee, having submitted to the Committee a Dissertation on the Law of Siam, by Captain James Low, of Penang,

It was Resolved,

“ That in consequence of the talent and spirit of inquiry evinced by Capt. Low, in that Dissertation, he be recommended to the Council, for election as a Corresponding Member of the Royal Asiatic Society.”

Sir Alexander Johnston having also laid before the Committee, the first volume of a Sanskrit Encyclopedical Dictionary, and a Bengalee Spelling-book, compiled by Baboo Radhacant Deb of Calcutta,

It was Resolved,

“ That in consequence of the talent displayed in those works, and the general exertions of Baboo Radhacant Deb, for the promotion of knowledge, he be recommended to the Council for election as a Corresponding Member of the Royal Asiatic Society.”*

March 11th, 1828.

It was Resolved, on the motion of Sir Alexander Johnston,

“ That a Report of the steps taken by this Society, in relation to Captain Low, and Baboo Radhacant Deb, be made to Lord William Bentinck, and Mr. Fullarton; and that those Governors be requested to afford their assistance to Captain Low, and Baboo Radhacant Deb, in the attainment of the Society's objects.”

NOTE 6.

Translation of a Letter from M. Abel Remusat, Secretary to the Asiatic Society at Paris, to Sir A. Johnston.

SIR :

Paris, November 25, 1827.

The Council of the Asiatic Society of Paris has received the letter in which you inform it of the intended publication of Messrs. T. and W. Daniell's Illustrations of India, and of the interest which the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland takes in the success of that enterprize. That interest is strongly participated in by the Asiatic Society of Paris, which knows that the approbation of your Society is granted only to useful works. The collection formed by Messrs. Daniell having also been most favourably noticed by His Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans, appears under such favourable auspices, that the Asiatic Society of Paris hastens to add its testimony of approbation to those which Messrs. Daniell have already received. In exemplification of this feeling, and for the purpose of complying with the desire expressed by His Royal Highness to the Council, in his letter of the 29th September, a commission was appointed, at the meeting held on the 1st October, to examine the drawings of Messrs. Daniell, and to report on them with as little delay as possible. This Commission, consisting of Messrs. J. P. Abel-Remusat, St. Martin and Eugene Burnouf, after having examined the materials collected by these learned artists, and obtaining from Mr. William Daniell all the necessary details on the nature of the subjects of which the work will be composed, and of the order in which they will be arranged, has communicated the result of its examination, and the expression of its high esteem for Messrs. Daniell and their important publication, in a report, which was read to the Society on the 6th November. On

* In consequence of this recommendation, Captain Low and Baboo Radhacant Deb were elected corresponding members of the Royal Asiatic Society on the 17th of May 1828.

the occasion of that report being read, it was resolved, that the greatest possible publicity should be given to it, and that it should be immediately sent to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, as a proof of the ardent desire felt by this Council to join with that Society in the encouragement of the publication of the Illustrations of India. That report I have now the honour of addressing to you, and request that you will communicate it to the learned body over which you preside.

The Council of the Asiatic Society of Paris, in unanimously adopting the conclusions contained in that report, has been actuated by the desire of shewing that it will not neglect any opportunity of uniting its efforts with those of the Royal Asiatic Society, for the advancement of the studies to which the Orientalists of both nations are equally devoted.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of the most distinguished consideration with which I have the honour to be,
Your very humble and obedient Servant,

(Signed) J. P. ABEL-REMSAT.

Sir Alex. Johnston received along with this letter the report to which it alludes, and a letter from the Baron Atthalin, first aide-de-camp to his Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans, of which the following is a translation.

To Sir Alexander Johnston, Knt.

SIR :

I was travelling when Mr. Daniell arrived in Paris, which prevented your letter, of which he was the bearer, reaching me till quite recently. Directly it was delivered I endeavoured to accomplish your wishes by making known to his Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans the interest that the Royal Asiatic Society, in its zeal for the promotion of the knowledge of Asia, takes in the publication of the Illustrations of India, by which those distinguished artists, Messrs. T. and W. Daniell, propose to complete their magnificent works, which have already so largely contributed to our acquaintance with that part of the globe.

His Royal Highness, highly appreciating the great skill of Messrs. Daniell, and desirous of encouraging a work which is so splendid a monument of persevering industry and highly cultivated talent, hastened to promote its success by immediately writing to Baron de Sacy, President of the Asiatic Society of Paris, recommending the Society, over which that much-respected Orientalist presides, to support, with all the means at its command, the intended publication.

In addition to addressing this recommendation to the *Société Asiatique*, His Royal Highness has subscribed for two copies, and their Royal Highnesses the Duchess of Orleans and Mademoiselle d'Orleans have each subscribed for one copy of Messrs. Daniell's very beautiful and interesting views ; to which also their Royal Highnesses have graciously expressed their intention, as opportunities offer, of directing the notice of those August Personages whose patronage will effectively promote the rapid increase of the list of subscribers.

His Royal Highness has been highly gratified by the occurrence of this opportunity of testifying his esteem for Mr. Daniell, and of evincing his anxiety to execute the wishes of the Royal Asiatic Society which has enrolled him among its honorary members, and of which you are the organ. That Society could not have chosen a more acceptable medium of communication to his Royal Highness, who recollects with much pleasure his former acquaintance with you, and is highly sensible of the obliging manner in which you have conveyed to him your ideas on Mr. Daniell's unrivalled collection of drawings relating to India.

Permit me to congratulate myself on having been selected to address you on this occasion, as it has given me an opportunity of rendering homage to talents, of which I am one of the most ardent admirers, and accept the expression of the high consideration with which I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your very humble and obedient Servant,

(Signed) BARON ATTHALIN,

Aide-de-camp to his Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans.

Neuilly, the 29th of September 1827.